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Population and Migration

NEW BOOKS

COMMONS, J. R. *Races and immigrants in America*. Revised edition. (New York: Macmillan. 1920. \$2.50.)

DRACHSLER, J. *Democracy and assimilation: the blending of immigrant heritages in America*. (New York: Macmillan. 1920. Pp. xii, 275. \$3.)

MONDAINI, M. G. *La colonisation anglaise*. (Paris: Editions Bossard, 43 rue Madame. 1920. Pp. 960.)

WOOFER, T. J., JR. *Negro migration: changes in rural organization and population of the cotton belt*. (New York: W. D. Gray, 106 Seventh Ave. 1920. Pp. 195. \$2.25.)

Problems of population and parenthood. Being the second report of and the chief evidence taken by the National Birth-rate Commission, 1918-1920. (New York: Dutton. 1920. Pp. clxvi, 423.)

Social Problems and Reforms

Immigration and Americanization. Selected Readings. Compiled and edited by PHILIP DAVIS. (Boston: Ginn and Company. 1920. Pp. xii, 770. \$4.00.)

As the editor of this bulky volume of "selected readings" notes, much of our ante-bellum literature on immigration is out of tune with the new order. For years before the war, students of the immigration question, especially those who were in personal, helpful contact with the immigrant, and who knew sympathetically and intimately, through settlement and charity work or otherwise, the difficulties and injustices to which the immigrant was subject because of his lack of knowledge of American ways and institutions, urged upon a heedless public the need of "assimilation." With the war came the militant awakening of the national consciousness, unfortunately assuming, under what we now recognize and confess to have been a species of crowd psychology and fear hysteria, a disposition not only nationalistic but occasionally jingoistic in the extreme. With this nationalistic jingoism, perfectly natural and to be expected under the circumstances, and exhibiting itself primarily in hatred of German-speaking communities and fear of the foreign-language press, came the popular, and therefore uncritical, demand for "Americanization," which was regarded as something new in the way of recommended social processes. Curiously—or perhaps not so curiously, to the objective observer of employer-class psychology—the cry for "Americanization" was taken up most loudly by precisely those interests and organs which in former years had been most conspicuously and cynically indifferent to any other aspect of immigration than the economic, and heedful of that only in so far as immigration

afforded ample supply of cheap and tractable labor. Such far-away and profitless ideals or processes as assimilation or Americanization had little appeal to those who, personally or in their corporate capacity, for the time being at least, could afford to be indifferent to the charge of organized labor that manufacturing and mining interests were breaking down, or at least keeping down, the American workman's wages and standard of living by the importation, sometimes in violation or evasion of the contract labor laws, first of French Canadians, and then of successive races from South and East Europe and West Asia, with successively lower standards of living, denser ignorance, and consecutively less assimilability to American conventions and ideals, or to the pleadings of scholars and publicists who saw in these waves of successively lower and more alien standards the promise of intensified class conflicts or the definite development of an industrial caste system little in accord with the ideals of liberty and opportunity upon which the Fathers are currently said to have founded the nation.

When the psycho-economic history of the years 1917 to 1921 shall be written by one sufficiently detached in time and sentiment, this sudden solicitude on the part of the ruling interests for the integrity of "American" ideals and viewpoints will doubtless be properly and fairly related to the fear of "radicalism" and the popular belief that "radicalism" and "foreign-language" are synonymous terms. Be that as it may, all classes now seem to be in accord, nominally at least, on the need of assimilation, or, as it is now more appealingly called, Americanization. Scores of Americanization societies, leagues, and committees have been formed, government and private agencies have drawn up dozens of programs and "aids," and literally thousands of tracts and pamphlets have burdened the press. Some of these projects have been conceived in a broad and liberal spirit, with a fairly single eye to the welfare of the immigrant and of America; most of them, perhaps, are less edifying. As the months have gone by, with their successive revelations of profiteering on the part of some erstwhile "100 per cent" Americans, steel strike reports, and other light in dark places, the more intelligent and circumspect public has begun to distinguish between Americanization "true and false," and to be a little cautious as to the sources of its inspiration and critical of the motives of those who would identify "American" with blind industrial reactionism. The plain truth is, of course, that the cause of disinterested and really patriotic Americanization or assimilation has been greatly injured by the attitude of the majority of employers and not greatly aided by the uncritical, headlong enthusiasm of some of its superficial friends.

All the more need, therefore, for deliberate study and consideration of the meaning and processes of Americanization, of the immigration

which has brought the problem upon us, and of the characteristics (actual, not imputed by nationalistic, entrepreneurial fancy) of those who are to be Americanized.

The book before us should be a valuable and welcome aid, both to the theoretical student, and to those engaged in the difficult tasks of Americanization itself. The first 425 pages are given over to selections on immigration proper—history, causes, characteristics, effects, and legislation. This leaves 320 pages for Americanization—policies and programs, distribution, education, naturalization. This part concludes with an enlightening, not to say entertaining, chapter setting forth in their own words the ideas of certain prominent public men and of a scholar or two, as to what “American” and “Americanization” mean, or at any rate ought to mean.

It would be beside the point to criticize the editor’s selections in detail. One excellent point is that they are chosen with view to an understanding of the immigrant as a person. The editor would perhaps have done better to omit much of the historical and statistical matter in part I and to have either expanded the pages on Americanization or, perhaps still better, reduced the size of his book.

Viewed from both theoretical and practical points of view, chapter XI, on Americanism contains the kernel of the whole question, offering, as it does, opportunity for comparison of ideals perhaps similar in substance but certainly widely different in emphasis, and suggestive of widely varying degrees of the nationalistic “complex.” The editor has here done good service in bringing together in close proximity the militant, “preparedness” version of Americanism held by Theodore Roosevelt, the idealism of President Wilson, and the trenchant analysis of a scholar like Frances A. Kellor. To the reviewer’s notion, the reprinting of the latter’s “What is Americanization” alone justifies the addition of yet another volume of “readings” or “selections,” a type of constructive composition now become surprisingly common in spite of the high cost of printing. Both the publishers and the editor are to be congratulated, the publishers in their choice of editor, for Mr. Davis knows from personal experience what it is to be an immigrant and to be “Americanized,” and the editor because his book shows exhaustive reading, keen appreciation of the purpose it should fulfill, and intelligent selection of material to that end. One wishes, however, that he had set out the Americanization ideals of the vested interests somewhat more sharply, and that he had devoted a very necessary chapter to the Americanization of the American.

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